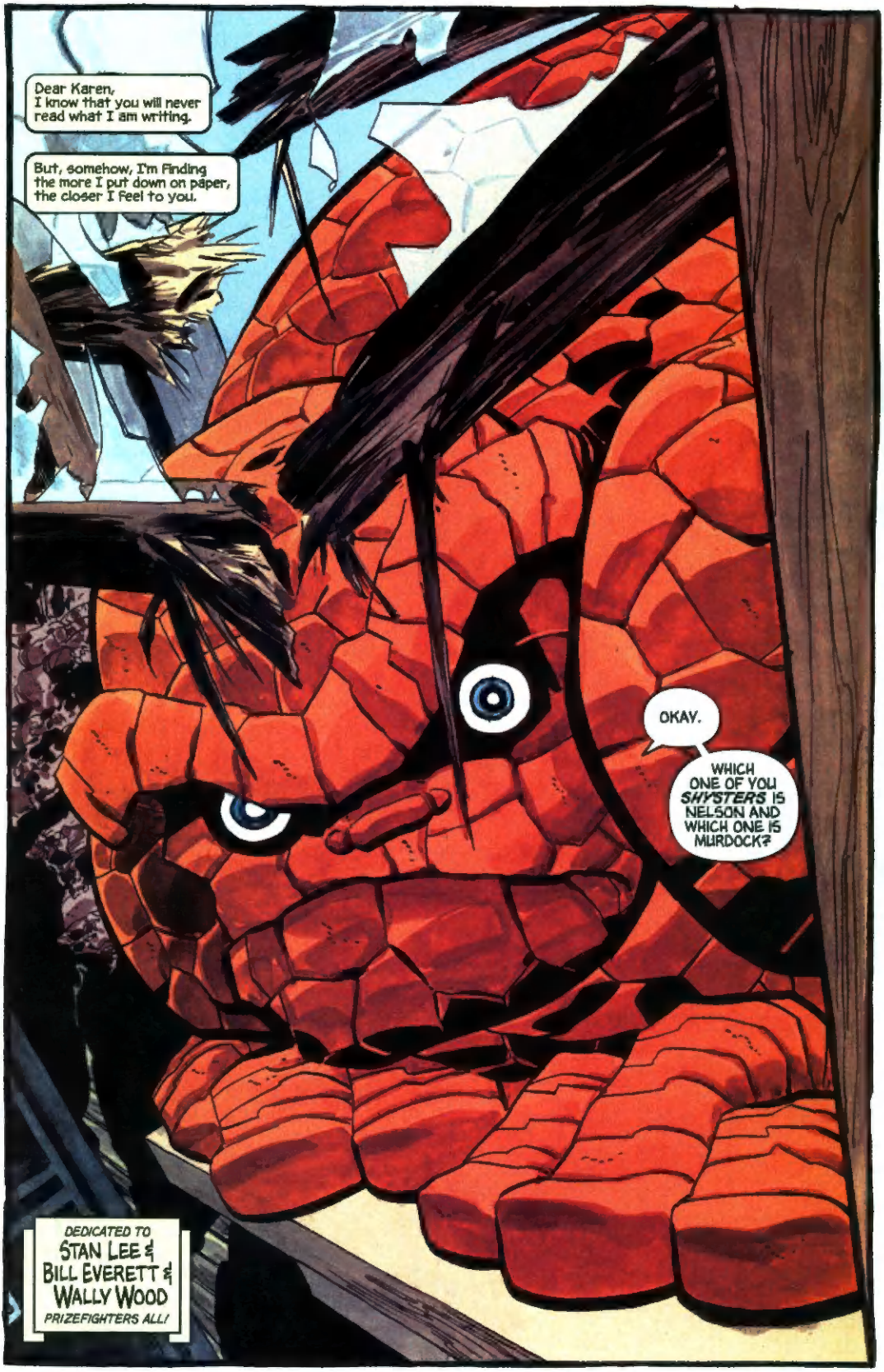
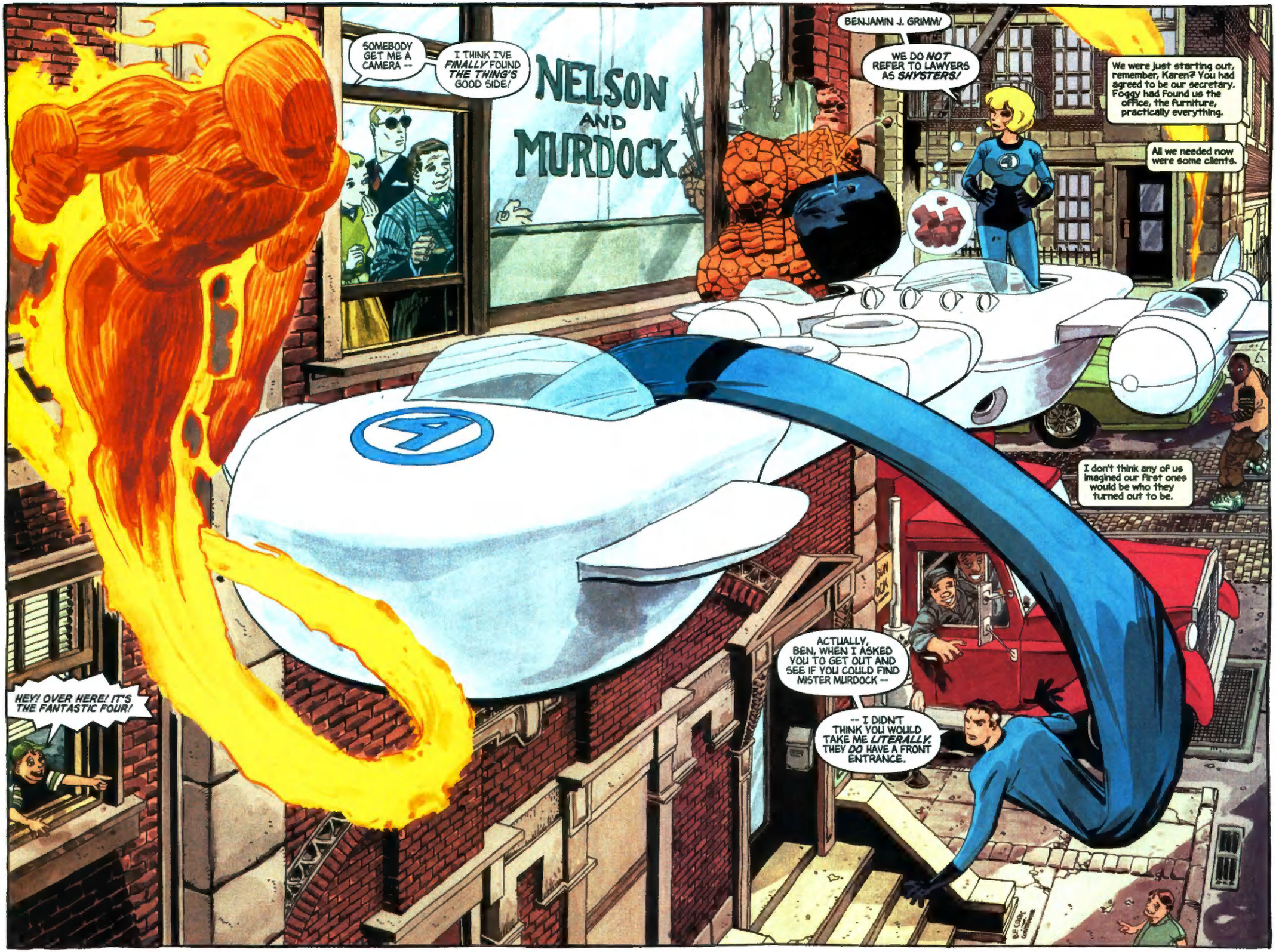
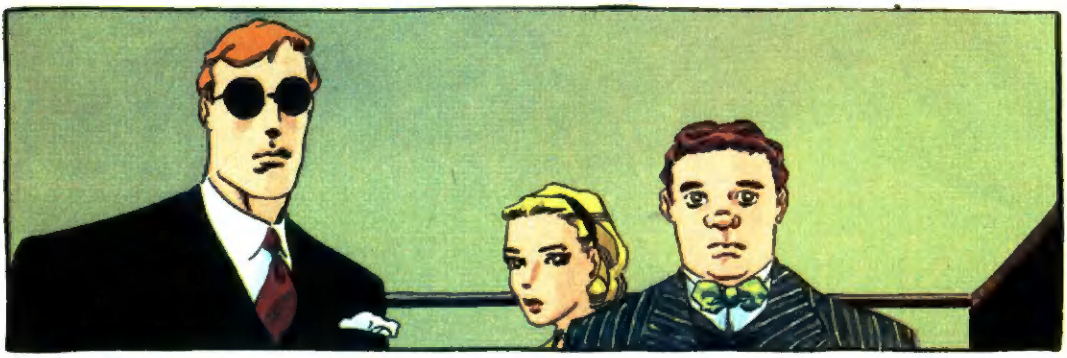

Dear Karen,
I know that you will never read what I am writing.
But, somehow, I'm finding the more I put down on paper, the closer I feel to you.
OKAY.
WHICH ONE OF YOU *SHYSTERS* IS NELSON AND WHICH ONE IS MURDOCK?
DEDICATED TO
STAN LEE &
BILL EVERETT &
WALLY WOOD
PRIZEFIGHTERS ALL!


SOMEBODY GET ME A CAMERA --
I THINK I'VE FINALLY FOUND THE THING'S GOOD SIDE!
NELSON AND MURDOCK
BENJAMIN J. GRIMM!
WE DO NOT REFER TO LAWYERS AS SHYSTERS!
We were just starting out, remember, Karen? You had agreed to be our secretary. Foggy had found us the office, the furniture, practically everything.
All we needed now were some clients.
I don't think any of us imagined our first ones would be who they turned out to be.
HEY! OVER HERE! IT'S THE FANTASTIC FOUR!
ACTUALLY, BEN, WHEN I ASKED YOU TO GET OUT AND SEE IF YOU COULD FIND MISTER MURDOCK --
-- I DIDN'T THINK YOU WOULD TAKE ME LITERALLY. THEY DO HAVE A FRONT ENTRANCE.

MATT. IF YOU'RE OPEN TO IT, WE'VE GOT SOME LEGAL WORK THAT NEEDS ATTENDING.
THE LEASE ON THE BAXTER BUILDING, PATENTS, THAT SORT OF THING?
WE'D BE HAPPY TO. AND ANYTHING ELSE YOU MIGHT WANT TO BRING US, MISTER RICHARDS.
FINE, THEN. DRAW UP A RETAINER AGREEMENT AND BE SURE TO INCLUDE THE COST OF REPAIRING YOUR WINDOW AND WALL.
WE WILL, SIR.
NELSON & MURDOCK
OH, AND MATT.
YES, SIR?
IT'S "REED."



WE'VE GOT OUR FIRST CLIENTS! WE'VE GOT OUR FIRST CLIENTS!
MISTER NELSON!
IT'S "FOGGY," KAREN.
"MISTER NELSON SOUNDS SO... MISTER NELSON!"
HA! CLASSIC MATT! I ALMOST WET MY PANTS! TELLING *THE* REED RICHARDS WHAT TO CALL HIM!

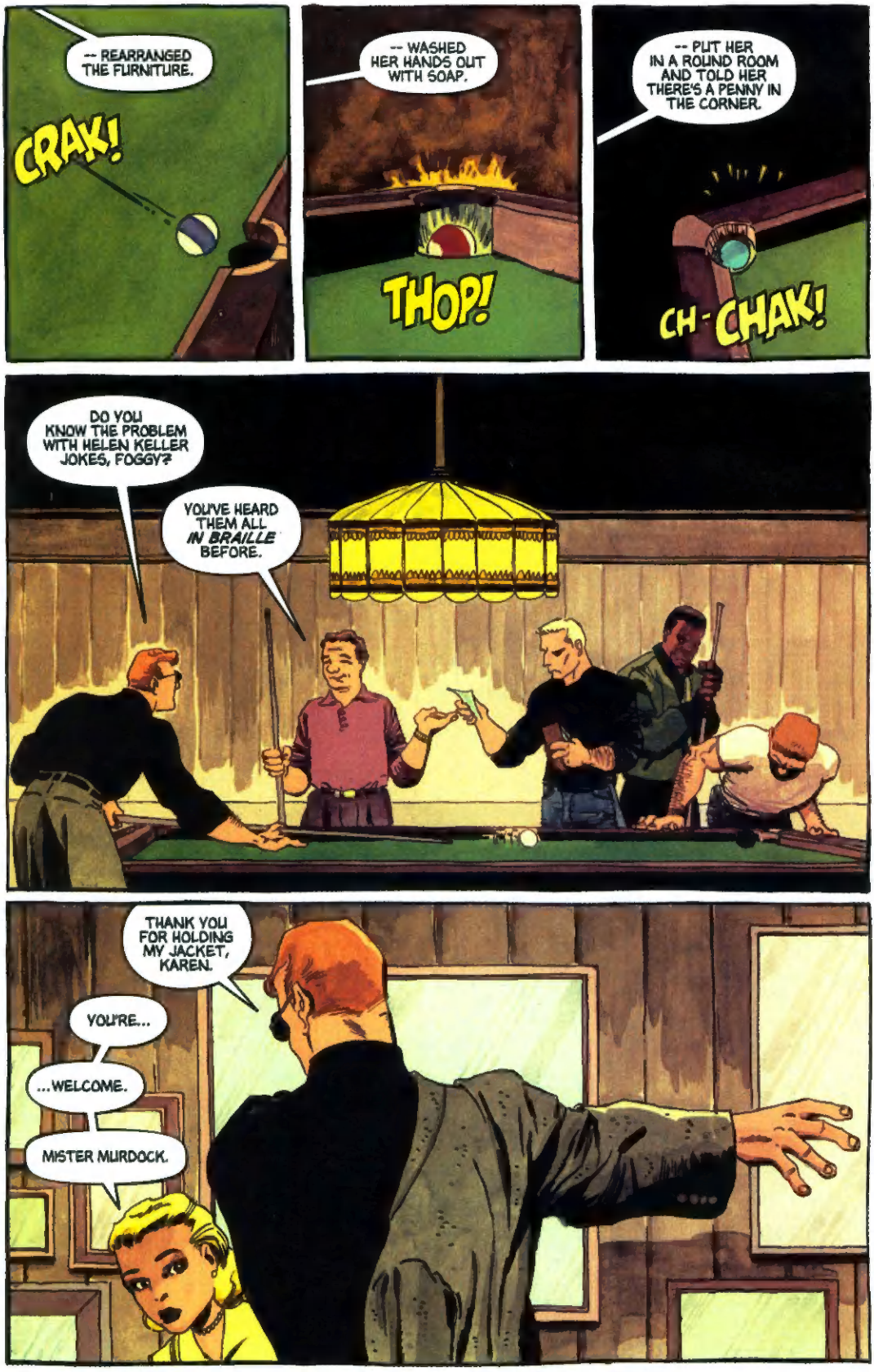
PLEASE DON'T MAKE FUN OF MISTER MURDOCK.
I THINK WE SHOULD BE VERY PROUD OF WHAT HE DID TODAY.
When you said that, your heart skipped a beat. What you didn't know was that mine did as well.

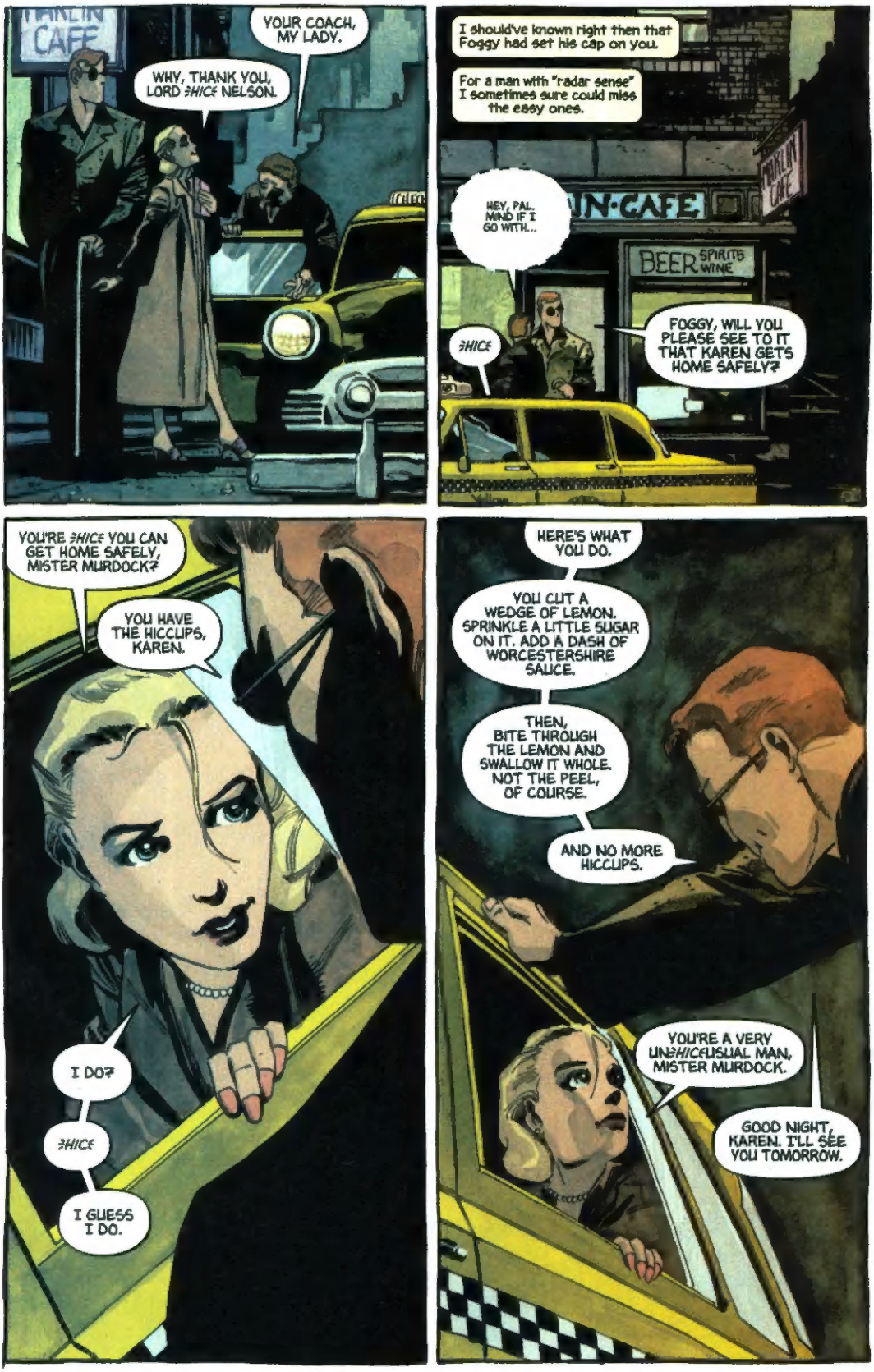
HEY, I DON'T CARE *WHAT* THEY CALL HIM, AS LONG AS THEIR CHECK CLEARS!
KAREN, WE'VE GOT TO GO OUT AND CELEBRATE. DRINKS TONIGHT AT *THE MARLIN CAFE.*
THE...MARLIN? FOGGY, IF KAREN IS GOING TO JOIN US, SHOULDN'T WE FIND SOME PLACE --
-- C'MON! OUR OLD COLLEGE WATERING HOLE? SHE'LL LOVE IT!
In the end, it wasn't worth arguing about. The way you said, "I think we should be very proud of what he did today" --
-- I forgot all about the Fantastic Four and what they thought.
On that day, I mattered to you.

I could've taken the subway uptown. Or the bus. Or a taxi.
But, with you on my mind, I thought I could fly.
And I thought about Thor and Iron Man and heroes like that who really could fly and I laughed to think people now might use my name in the same sentence.
It was almost surreal. Hiding my costume. Changing in the shadows.
I had even thought ahead to remove my mask last in case someone should see me.
A grown man taking off his clothes in an alley. I thought that was against the law.

Despite all that had happened to me, some things never changed. I hadn't set foot in the Marlin Cafe since college, but Antonio was still behind the bar acting like I had been there the night before.
Pacifico, the mad poet, still recited to anyone who would listen. The Tiger Lady still growled and hissed into her drink.
BUENAS NOCHES, SEÑOR MATT!
BUENAS NOCHES, ANTONIO. ESTA USTED BIEN?
SI, GRACIAS. EL SEÑOR FOGGY IS IN THE BACK. CON UNA CHICA MUY BONITA.
GROWWW HISSSS
"SI DE PRONTO NO EXISTES, SI DE PRONTO NO VIVES, YO SEGUIRE VIVIENDO."
The stench of cigarette smoke was thick and nauseating. The soap bar in the urinal in the Men's room was more refreshing.

MATT! MATT! GET IN HERE!
MISTER MURDOCK, DO YOU NEED ANY HELP?
But one thing had changed about the place. I could tell you were wearing "Charlie".
They don't make that perfume anymore.
It's gone now...


-- REARRANGED THE FURNITURE.
CRAK!
-- WASHED HER HANDS OUT WITH SOAP.
THOP!
-- PUT HER IN A ROUND ROOM AND TOLD HER THERE'S A PENNY IN THE CORNER.
CH-CHAK!
DO YOU KNOW THE PROBLEM WITH HELEN KELLER JOKES, FOGGY?
YOU'VE HEARD THEM ALL *IN BRAILLE* BEFORE.
THANK YOU FOR HOLDING MY JACKET, KAREN.
YOU'RE...
...WELCOME.
MISTER MURDOCK.


CAFE
YOUR COACH, MY LADY.
WHY, THANK YOU, LORD ƷHICƐ NELSON.
I should've known right then that Foggy had set his cap on you.
For a man with "radar sense" I sometimes sure could miss the easy ones.
HEY, PAL. MIND IF I GO WITH...
ƷHICƐ
FOGGY, WILL YOU PLEASE SEE TO IT THAT KAREN GETS HOME SAFELY?
BEER
SPIRITS
WINE
YOU'RE ƷHICƐ YOU CAN GET HOME SAFELY, MISTER MURDOCK?
YOU HAVE THE HICCUPS, KAREN.
I DO?
ƷHICƐ
I GUESS I DO.
HERE'S WHAT YOU DO.
YOU CUT A WEDGE OF LEMON. SPRINKLE A LITTLE SUGAR ON IT. ADD A DASH OF WORCESTERSHIRE SAUCE.
THEN, BITE THROUGH THE LEMON AND SWALLOW IT WHOLE. NOT THE PEEL, OF COURSE.
AND NO MORE HICCUPS.
YOU'RE A VERY UNƷHICƐUSUAL MAN, MISTER MURDOCK.
GOOD NIGHT, KAREN. I'LL SEE YOU TOMORROW.

BRAK!
My father would talk about never leading with your left.
FAP
BDIF
DONK
Since he was a Southpaw, it meant his left-handed punch was his best stuff.

I miss my Father, Karen. Some days, I admit, I miss him even more than I miss you. I hope you can understand that. I loved you both in different ways and both so very much.
WHAT DO YOU WANT, MURDOCK?
YOU'RE ALREADY LOOKING AT A DEAD MAN.
WHAT THE HELL MORE COULD YOU POSSIBLY WANT?
It was an election year and the District Attorney wanted to make an example of someone to show he was tough on crime.
Slade, the man who killed my Father, was swiftly given the death penalty.
YOU WANT ME TO SAY THAT I'M SORRY?
WELL, I'M NOT.
YOUR FATHER WAS A BUM.
HE AGREED TO TAKE A DIVE AND THEN, HE BACKED OUT ON IT.
IN MY BUSINESS, YOU DON'T DO THAT.
YOU SHOULDA SEEN IT, KID. I PUT THE GUN UP TO THE BACK OF YOUR OLD MAN'S HEAD AND BLEW HIS BRAINS OUT.
OH.
THAT'S RIGHT.
YOU CAN'T SEE.

AS I WAS TELLING MISTER NELSON, I DON'T LIVE IN NEW YORK CITY.
MY HUSBAND -- WAS A GOOD MAN. AN *IMPORTANT* MAN.
AND I DID SOME THINGS -- SOME *TERRIBLE* THINGS. BUT I DID THEM TO PROTECT *HIM*.
AND NOW SOMEONE HAS FOUND OUT.
HE'S THREATENED TO EXPOSE ME -- TO SEND ME TO *JAIL* IF I DON'T PAY HIM MONEY.
CAN YOU TELL US WHO THIS PERSON IS?
I -- I SHOULDN'T HAVE COME HERE.
HE'LL FIND ME.
THAT'S WHAT HE DOES!
SO.
HOW'S THE *REST* OF YOUR DAY BEEN GOING?
SHE WAS *LYING*. I DON'T KNOW ABOUT WHAT, BUT SHE WAS LYING ABOUT SOMETHING.
HOW CAN YOU --? I KNOW, I KNOW, YOU JUST *CAN*. RIGHT, PARTNER?
SLAM!

GOOD AFTERNOON, GENTLEMEN.
I BELIEVE IN COMING STRAIGHT TO THE POINT.
A YOUNG WOMAN CAME TO SEE YOU THIS AFTERNOON AND, NO DOUBT, TOLD YOU SOME SCURRILOUS AND LIBELOUS THINGS ABOUT ME.
AND YOU ARE...?
MY REAL NAME IS OF LITTLE IMPORTANCE, ONLY THAT MY BUSINESS ASSOCIATES REFER TO ME AS...
...THE OWL.
AND I WISH TO EMPLOY YOUR SERVICES.
LOEB SALE '2001